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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/58/503)*]

58/150. Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/172 of 23 December 1994, 50/150 of 21 December 1995, 51/73 of 12 December 1996, 52/105 of 12 December 1997, 53/122 of 9 December 1998, 54/145 of 17 December 1999 and 56/136 of 19 December 2001,

Aware of the fact that the majority of refugees are children and women,

Bearing in mind that unaccompanied refugee minors are among the most vulnerable refugees and the most at risk of neglect, violence, forced military recruitment, sexual assault, abuse and vulnerability to infectious disease, such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, malaria and tuberculosis, and therefore require special assistance and care,

Mindful of the fact that the ultimate solution to the plight of unaccompanied minors is their return to and reunification with their families,

Bearing in mind that the most important steps in working with unaccompanied minors are rapid identification, immediate registration and documentation and tracing of family,

Recalling the outcome document entitled "A world fit for children", adopted on 10 May 2002 by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh special session,[1]

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund in the identification and tracing of unaccompanied minors, and welcoming their efforts in reunifying families of refugees,

Welcoming the efforts exerted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to reunite refugees with their families,

Noting the efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees, including children and unaccompanied minors, and that further enhanced efforts need to be exerted to this effect,

[1] Resolution S-27/2, annex.

Recalling the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, [2] and the 1951 Convention[3] and the 1967 Protocol thereto[4] relating to the Status of Refugees,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[5]

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the continuing plight of unaccompanied refugee minors, and emphasizes once again the urgent need for their early identification and for timely, detailed and accurate information on their number and whereabouts;

3. *Stresses* the importance of providing adequate resources for programmes of identification, registration, documentation and tracing of unaccompanied minors and their reunification with their families;

4. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to incorporate into its programmes policies that aim at preventing the separation of refugee families, conscious of the importance of family unity;

5. *Calls upon* all Governments, the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, as well as other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to exert the maximum effort to assist and protect refugee minors and to expedite the return and reunification with their families of unaccompanied refugee minors;

6. *Urges* the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, as well as other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to take appropriate steps to mobilize resources commensurate with the needs of unaccompanied refugee minors and for their reunification with their families;

7. *Calls upon* all States and other parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law and, in this regard, calls upon States parties to respect fully the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[6] and related instruments, and to respect the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[2] which accord children affected by armed conflict special protection and treatment;

8. *Condemns* all acts of exploitation of unaccompanied refugee minors, including their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflict and their forced recruitment into military forces, and any other acts that endanger their safety and personal security;

9. *Acknowledges* that education is among the most effective initial means of ensuring protection for unaccompanied minors, especially girls, by shielding them from exploitative activities such as child labour, military recruitment or sexual exploitation and abuse;

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[2] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[4] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[5] A/58/299.

[6] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

10. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund, other United Nations organizations and other international organizations to mobilize adequate assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors in the areas of relief, education, recreational activities, health and psychological rehabilitation;

11. *Encourages* the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in his efforts to raise awareness worldwide and mobilize official and public opinion for the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including refugee minors;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution and to give special attention in his report to the girl-child refugee.

77th plenary meeting
22 December 2003